

**Statement of Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing  
“Iran: Recent Developments and Implications for U.S. Policy.”  
July 22, 2009, 10:00am, Room 2172 Rayburn**

As I mentioned in the hearing earlier this month on the proposed U.S.-UAE civil nuclear cooperation agreement, I am an equal opportunity worrier.

Last July, in a hearing before this Committee, I criticized the Bush Administration’s endorsement of an expanded incentives package under the P5+1, stating that: “It granted undue legitimacy and leverage to the regime in Tehran, and the only thing we have to show for this approach is that Iran is now two years closer to a nuclear capability.”

My remarks are as true today as they were then.

Just in the seven years since Iran’s illegal nuclear program was uncovered, the U.S. position has gone from imitating the successful Libya model and calling for the complete, permanent, and verifiable dismantlement of Iran’s nuclear program

- to calling for the cessation of enrichment and reprocessing,
- to temporary suspension,
- to the current U.S. position, whereby the U.S. has accepted a so-called Iranian civilian nuclear program, is pursuing direct engagement with the Iranian regime, and is engaged in the proliferation of nuclear cooperation agreements with other countries in the Middle East.

Secretary Clinton stated earlier today that the U.S. would upgrade the defense capabilities of and extend a “defense umbrella” over U.S. allies in the Persian Gulf.

This was met with much concern and skepticism in Israel where Dan Meridor, the Minister of Intelligence and Atomic Energy, told Army Radio: “I was not thrilled to hear the American statement...that they will protect their allies with a nuclear umbrella, as if they have already come to terms with a nuclear Iran.”

I would ask our witnesses today for their views on this U.S. approach; whether it signals an acceptance by the U.S. of a “nuclear Iran”; and how this affects sanctions efforts and other options.

Turning to recent developments inside Iran and how these could affect the regime’s and our strategic calculations, the so-called Supreme Leader must now resort to manipulating elections and using force against unarmed demonstrators to preserve the regime’s hold on power.

Regime authorities have detained independent-minded individuals and repressed organizations, under the guise of protecting the regime against what it labels as “internal enemies,” “saboteurs,” and even “revolutionaries.”

A process that has gone largely unnoticed outside of Iran, is the rise of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, or IRGC.

The rule of the mullahs has been significantly replaced by that of the IRGC, a quasi-military organization which has become the predominant power in that country.

The IRGC controls large swaths of the economy and society and uses its police and military forces to ensure obedience.

It even has a dominant role in Iran's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

It is only in this context that we can fully understand what is taking place in Iran following the sham elections on June 12<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to providing us with their analysis of Iran's internal developments, I would appreciate our witnesses addressing how these are affecting the regime's influence outside of the country and how we can capitalize on any political and economic vulnerabilities.

For decades, Iran has spread unrest around the world directly and through its proxies such as Hezbollah and Hamas.

Tehran has also facilitated attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The regime continues to pursue longer range missiles and seeks to enhance its chemical and biological weapons capabilities.

The most salient issue is Iran's nuclear weapons program.

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently said: "The clock has continued to tick" on Iran's development of nuclear capabilities and our time to stop them is running out.

Ahmadinejad has declared many times that negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program are dead. He reiterated that position on May 25<sup>th</sup> of this year and again last month.

It is time for our policy to be based on facts, not hope.

It is long past time we apply a badly needed sense of urgency to our policy towards the Iranian regime.

It is time for us to finally realize that a regime that tortures, oppresses, and violently suppresses dissent—that has only disdain for its people—is not a regime the U.S. should be legitimizing.

I look forward to receiving the testimony of our witnesses today and listening to their recommendations of what the United States can do to support the Iranian people, while undermining the regime's ability to threaten its people, the region, and global peace and security.